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2019

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Recommended Citation

Hendrix, John S., "Philosophy of Perception in Hegel" (2019). *Architecture, Art, and Historic Preservation Faculty Publications*. 42.

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Philosophy of Perception in Hegel

John Shannon Hendrix

According to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in the *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (*The Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art*, 1886), beauty in art is a higher beauty than that of nature, because beauty in art is a product of the mind, or spirit, the intellectual rather than the sensory. In the *Symposium* of Plato, when the initiate learns to love all beautiful bodies rather than just one body, to “pursue the beauty of form” (210)¹ rather than the beauty of the body, to turn away from the “low and small-minded slavery” of love for the beauty of a body, and turn “towards the great sea of beauty and gazing on it he’ll give birth, through a boundless love of knowledge, to many beautiful and magnificent discourses and ideas,” the initiate ascends to the beauty of mind which is higher than the beauty of nature and which can be represented in art, discourses and ideas. Thus for Hegel in the *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, the beauty of art is “born—born again, that is—of the mind....”²

In the *Symposium*, the beauty of mind is to be found in the goodness of mind, the good, so real beauty will be found in goodness, “practices and laws,” in comparison to the beauty of the body, the beauty of nature. In that goodness, practices and laws, the activities of reason, are subjects of knowledge, or forms of knowledge, it is forms of knowledge which become the higher beauty. In the *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, “mind, and mind only, is capable of truth, and comprehends in itself all that is, so that whatever is beautiful can only be really and truly beautiful as partaking in this higher element and as created thereby” (§III). Following Kant, all reality is given by mind, but ultimately for Hegel, it is in the interaction between mind and the sensory world given by perception, which is a product of mind, reconciling the gap between the Platonic idea and the sensible world, or the idea of beauty as it is applied to the objects of perception. Mind “comprehends in itself all that is,” so that sensible beauty can exist in the real, what is perceived, but it is a product of the ideal, of mind. The beauty of nature thus “reveals itself as but a reflection of the beauty which belongs to the mind, as an imperfect, incomplete mode of being....” Beauty in nature is a product of mind inserting itself into the sensible world, of coming to terms with what

mind perceives as being alien to it, as Hegel explains at length in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

In the *Timaeus* of Plato, the reflections of sensible appearance are caused by the interaction of the interior and the exterior in perception, between the intellectual and the sensible, described by Plato as internal and external fires. According to Plato, “And the principles governing reflections in mirrors and other smooth reflecting surfaces are not that difficult to understand. All such appearances are necessary consequences of the combination of the internal and external fire, which form a unity at the reflecting surface, though distorted in various ways, the fire of the face seen coalescing with that of the eye on the smooth reflecting surface” (*Timaeus* 46).³ The interaction of the internal and external fires results in sensible appearances, composed of distortions, reflections and shadows, momentary manifestations in the flux of being. Images in the sensory world do not exist without being perceived; they are the products of mind, their qualities are given by mind, and they are understood by reason in mind. Sensory appearances as we understand them are self-reflections of mind, which is why an understanding of perception is necessary for an understanding of the operations of intellect.

The sensory world for Hegel must be seen as an imperfect and incomplete mode of being, as it is given by mind, but not all of mind. That aspect of mind which tells itself that the sensory world is a reflection of mind, that is, self-consciousness, is not present in the sensory world. The self-consciousness of mind reveals the presence of mind in perception; both mind and sensory appearance thus participate in the absolute, which is the unity of mind and perception, of the ideal and real. The self-consciousness of mind reveals the necessity of the absolute in existence, of the grounds of the relation between the perceiving mind and what is perceived. The absolute is present in what is perceived, but it is not revealed by perception, perception being a function of reason and language, a dissemination of the absolute in logic which thus cannot participate in the absolute, as in the relation between the One of Plotinus and both intellect and sensory appearance.

Perception constructs the real as a product of the ideal, as containing the same essence, but in so doing establishes the incompatibility of the real and ideal. “Nature is not thus to be set over against absolute Mind, either as conjoint with a sphere of the Real of equal worth, or as an independent boundary thereto. Rather the aspect which Nature appears to hold in this respect is that which mind or spirit itself sets up, and of which it becomes the product as a Nature in which limit and boundary are themselves determining constituents.

In fact, Mind in its absolute or infinite substance can only be apprehended as this free activity, which is manifested in self-development through differentiation” (*Introduction to The Philosophy of Fine Art [Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics]*, pp. 126–127),⁴ differentiation from the absolute, manifestation of intelligence in the real. Differentiation, the setting of oppositions, is in fact the activity by which the ideal enters into the real in perception, thus it must be differentiation in the ideal which leads the real in the ideal to the absolute.

Nature, the real, what is perceived, is the “Idea in *apparent shape*, which mind, in its synthetic power, posits as the object opposed to itself,” as described by Hegel (p. 127). What is perceived is thus “the determination by mind of its own substance, its ideality and power of determination, through a process which no doubt begins with a separation of itself into two factors which apparently negate each other, but which, by the very activity of such negation and separation, passes beyond the contradiction it implies to a unity which heals the fracture.” The dialectical synthesis of the differentiation in the absolute in the ideal constitutes the subjectivity of mind, the subjective. In subjective mind, the real is not “*explicitly* unfolded,” as it is in perception, and complete self-consciousness. The real becomes the other to subjective mind in its state of explication, but an other that is defined by finitude rather than the infinity of the absolute. Mind must project itself into its other in order to recover the infinity of the absolute in the subjective. Mind cannot recover its subjectivity in the real through logic or discursive reason, through that which established its finitude in the real. This can only be accomplished in the intellectual in philosophy.

In perception, mind always has a sense that what is being given of the real in perception is not being in its completion; the limitations of reason are self-apparent in self-consciousness as well. The nature of the human mind is to seek completion in being, whether it be reconciliation of the primordial dehiscence, or recognition of the presence of the absolute in the ideal. Ordinary consciousness is the “entirely finite, temporal, contradictory, and for that reason transitory, unsatisfied, and un-reconciled spirit” (p. 128). In such a consciousness, the satisfactions of reason can only have a “purely relative and isolated validity,” a condition which thought must necessarily seek to surpass. Appearance as given by perception is seen as a finite function of reason, and in the perception of the real, the intersection of mind and what is external to it, “mind grasps its finiteness as the negation of its own essential substance, and is aware of its infinity.” In this activity mind is subjective because it is self-determinate and the object of its own will. In this activity

mind enacts the principle of differentiation which is the essence of the absolute; reasoning mind doubles itself in relation to the absolute, where the knower and the known are undifferentiated. In this way the infinite is injected into the finite, the ideal into the real, as the real is participant in reason. In absolute mind, the intellectual of Plotinus, principle and activity are the same, ideal and real. In the ideal, the real is participant in the absolute.

In the *Phaedrus* (249) of Plato, reason gathers the “multiplicity of sense-impressions” and creates from them universals.⁵ In order to do this, it must recollect its perception of sense impressions as archetypes, a kind of perception to which it was initiated, in the intersection of mind and appearance, ideal and real. Philosophy is the application of the remembrance of archetypal images in perception, the *a priori* synthesis of the real and ideal applied to the real, in the intersection of mind and appearance as given by perception. If the soul of the philosopher dwells in the memory of the archetypal images, in the presence of the absolute in mind, then it will experience a “continual initiation into the perfect mystic vision.” The philosopher in the *Phaedrus* thus appears to ordinary consciousness to be “out of his wits,” to be possessed by a god. “This then is the fourth type of madness, which befalls when a man, reminded by the sight of beauty on earth of the true beauty,” as in the *Symposium*, “grows his wings and endeavors to fly upward, but in vain, exposing himself to the reproach of insanity because like a bird he fixes his gaze on the heights to the neglect of things below,” but beholds his true being.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit*, first published in 1807, is an attempt to establish the manifestation of the absolute in the experience of the real. The Philosophy of Spirit seeks to define the individual subject in relation to the universal culture; it sees the individual as a microcosm of its culture, in the same way that in classical philosophy the individual was seen as a microcosm of the structure of the universe. It is in the self-consciousness of mind, or spirit, that the absolute is most completely manifested, in the independent activity of mind, the products of which are philosophy and art. The self-consciousness of mind contains the ideas of the universal as archetypes for reason and perception, in the same way as the intellectual of Plotinus, which is participated in by the absolute, and which dictates forms to discursive reason. Self-consciousness allows mind to translate sense experience in perception into idea, as manifestation of the absolute. Perception alone, without the participation of self-consciousness, can only present a limited picture of the real to mind, a picture determined by appearances and inchoate forms. The understanding in self-consciousness makes perceptible an underlying struc-

ture of signification in relation to perceived forms and appearances, which allows the experience of the real in perception to be integrated with mind to form an experience which synthesizes the real and the ideal, the objective and subjective, and the individual thinking subject and universal principles as manifestations of the absolute.

Mind or spirit comes to be seen as reality, the inner being of the world which assumes objective, determinate form, and enters into relations with itself as externality. It doubles itself in its otherness, but retains its inner essence within itself, self-contained and self-complete, which is inaccessible to its manifestations in the particular. Mind is implicit in its nature as self-contained (*an sich*); it does not exist in the real, and does not exhibit the qualities of the real, of differentiation in the particular, until the initial doubling of itself as otherness or externality, through perception. Mind becomes object, but as object mind is immediately negated. Mind becomes self-reflected in the object which is the product of its doubling, which is discursive reason. Discursive reason is the objective self-reflection of mind, resulting from a self-alienation of mind in the perceived world. Mind, the intellectual, is negated in reason, but is reflected by reason, so that reason can perceive it.

When the object in the sensible world is perceived, it comes into being, because the unfolding of the universal from the particular is enacted in relation to mind. The object is perceived as containing both the particular and universal, and its coming into being is its process of differentiation of the universal from the particular, the process of reason toward understanding, which mind perceives in itself in self-consciousness, which is enacted in perception in relation to the object perceived. The object perceived becomes an element and a catalyst of the dialectical process of mind toward understanding. The act of perceiving is the act of mind in reason toward understanding. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “the way we take in perception is no longer something that just happens to us like sense-certainty; on the contrary, it is logically necessitated. With the emergence of the principle, the two moments which in their appearing merely *occur*, also come into being: one being the movement of pointing-out or the *act of perceiving*, the other being the same movement as a simple event or the object perceived. In essence the object is the same as the movement: the movement is the unfolding and differentiation of the two moments, and the object is the apprehended togetherness of the moments” (§111).⁶ The universal is immediately present in the object which

is perceived, because the object cannot be defined as other than being perceived, and thus contains within it the process of perception.

The principle of the universal is the essence of perception. The perceiving subject, and the object which is perceived, are both unessential in relation to the process of perception as particulars, but both contain the principle of the universal within them, and in combination as opposites, constitute the universal principle of perception. The coincidence of opposites is always already present in the universal, as the self-differentiation of the absolute. The act of perception creates the unessential character of both the perceiver and the object perceived in the process of differentiation which must then be reconciled in understanding toward which reason in perception progresses. The variable properties of an object of perception are the exhibition of the universal within the particular as enacted by perception. The properties of an object are constructed by perception, as products of the progression of reason toward understanding, toward the absolute. Though it is a screen which masks the essential nature of the absolute in the real, as in the *Republic* of Plato, the flux of appearance is the necessary context of the real in perception, in interaction with the ideal, toward the revelation of the absolute.

In perception as the self-consciousness of reason, the object of perception is transformed from the particular which embodies the absence of being into a participant in the principle of the universal which reveals the absolute. Perception negates the existence of the object as a particular, and in the process allows the object to come into being in the universal. Being, as the principle of the universal, contains the negation within it; being is not possible without non-being, as perception is not possible without the object perceived. The negation of being is contained in the differentiation of the object of perception, in the multiple permutations given to the object by perception. Coming to being contains the negation of being as well. The multiple permutations of the object are independent of each other as particulars, and are related to each other through the principle of the universal, which is independent of them. The multiple particulars of the flux of appearance only participate in the universal through reason; in the suspension of reason, the multiple particulars—shadows, reflections, refractions, trajectories, etc. (the qualities of objects in perception)—appear as self-determinate entities, embodying the universal within themselves, independent of the process of reason. The ground of non-being appears as being, in the complete self-alienation of reason from being. The differentiation between reason and being, as given by reason in being, is that which is overcome in the process of perception.

In conscious perception the object of perception is developed in reason, in particular the contradictions contained within the object as it is perceived. The object is perceived as both a particular and a universal; as a universal the object participates in being, in coming into being; as a particular the object is non-being. The object perceived as non-being is also the object perceived as being; being simultaneously co-exists with being in perception, reason with non-reason. Non-being is also the essence of the absolute. The particular as non-being which excludes itself from the community of being in reason contains the same essence which is revealed through reason in understanding, as a product of perception. It is in this way that reason participates in being, and consciousness in perception, which “has a mediated relation to the inner being and, as the Understanding, looks through this mediating play of Forces into the true background of things” (*Phenomenology of Spirit* §143). That which unites understanding and the essence of being is appearance in perception, which, as understanding and being come together, is “henceforth only a vanishing.”

Appearance is in its own self a non-being and a surface show, as in the *Republic*, a non-essential medium of understanding in perception. As a surface show, appearance displays the principle of the universal, a totality in relation to particulars, which is contained in the particulars. In appearance, as given by perception, the particular immediately becomes its own opposite, as the particular is transformed into the universal by reason, thus appearance in perception is unstable and ephemeral. The negative dialectic of appearance becomes a positive in the understanding of the principle of the universal. The being of the object is “mediated by the movement of appearance” (§143) in consciousness and becomes the negation of being as a particular. Consciousness sees itself, its own processes, in the negative dialectic of appearance. The negation of being becomes being in reason as self-differentiation; it is activated in the dialectical becoming of being, as the particular is transformed into the universal. The “objective vanishing appearance” given by perception becomes the being-for-self of consciousness in the negative dialectic. The self-differentiation of the absolute, and the self-alienation of reason from being, becomes the being of reason in relation to the absolute.

Reason, in its self-differentiation, is a product of the synthesis of the universal and the particular beyond the particular. The negation of being confirms being beyond appearance and the sensible world, beyond the mechanisms of perception and of reason itself, which is a function of non-reason in the same way. The essence of being is found in the supersensible,

as in the idea of Plato and the intelligible of Plotinus, that which exceeds the dialectic of being and non-being in perception, reason and non-reason in mind, the double negative of the identity of the ideal and the real. Appearance in perception is an element in reason in the dialectic between being and the absolute, and in syllogistic reasoning between the absolute and being, as it is embodied in the particular; “above the vanishing present world there opens up a permanent beyond” (§144) in the absolute. The beyond is the inner world in relation to consciousness, where consciousness is unable to find itself. It is the empty nothingness of being in appearance, the self-alienation of reason as manifest in perception, and the simple and unitary universal which is inaccessible to the particulars of perception and logic.

The world of appearance is the essence of the supersensible beyond in the sense that it is through appearance that the absolute comes into being, though appearance at the same time negates the being of the absolute. The world of appearance is the sensible world posited by reason as having been superseded by the universal in perception; appearance itself is the mediation between the real and the ideal in perception, thus appearance is the essence of the absolute in relation to the real, to the sensible world, given that there is a sensible world beyond appearance or perception. There must be a sensible world beyond appearance in order that reason be self-determinant, and that consciousness become self-consciousness in the understanding of an absolute. “The supersensible is therefore appearance qua appearance” (§147); proof of the supersensible, thus the sensible, is given by appearance, by the double negative of appearance in being, by reason itself, and in particular the limitations of discursive reason.

The double negative of appearance in itself has no significance; it is empty as shadow and reflection. It is only as mediator of being and understanding that appearance in perception, as construct of reason, assumes significance. Appearance is the meeting of being and understanding, through the self-determination of being. The “play of forces” (§148) in appearance enacts an interplay or interchange “of the determinateness which constitutes the sole content of what appears: to be either a universal medium, or a negative unity.” The content of appearance is the dialectic of being and understanding, of nothingness and the absolute, in the particular and the universal. The interplay constitutes a transformation of the particular to the universal, of the dark ground of being to the ineffable absolute, carried out by the particulars of reason and perception. In the process of being becoming understanding, it is negated in its being by reason and is absorbed into the

principle of the universal, by which being is given to understanding. The essence of being is self-differentiated, and what is left in understanding of being is only the self-differentiation of being. The principle of the universal in understanding is an “absolute flux” which “is only difference as a universal difference, or as a difference into which the many antitheses have been resolved.”

The understanding is the *différance* of Deconstruction, the “systematic play of differences,”⁷ as described by Jacques Derrida in *Positions*, a “generative movement in the play of differences” in appearance, a negation of being in understanding which has only a deferred presence in reason. The play of differences in appearance is a “spacing” in reason, which “designates *nothing*, nothing that is, no presence at a distance; it is the index of an irreducible exterior, and at the same time of a *movement*, a displacement that indicates an irreducible alterity” (p. 81), the movement of the play of differences in perception, the double negation of being in perception, and the self-alienation of reason in being. For Hegel, in the principle of the universal the flux of differences becomes absolute and simple; the universal of the essence of being is both absolute identity and absolute difference. Negation is an essential aspect of the universal flux of difference, and is itself a universal difference. The negation of being is an essential element in the universal flux of differences as being. In reason, through appearance, the play of differences, the *différance*, is translated into universal principle.

The principle in reason which is the expression of *différance* is the “stable image of unstable appearance” (*Phenomenology of Spirit* §149) according to Hegel, the reconstruction of appearance in perception as given to reason by reason. The only principle of appearance itself is the universal flux of differences, as in the turbulence of the immortal souls thrust into the universal body in the *Timaeus* (43) of Plato, which “were unable to control it, nor were they controlled by it, and because of the constant violent conflict the motions of the whole creature were irregular, fortuitous and irrational.” The supersensible world of the absolute in understanding is the law of stability in identity which corresponds to the law of instability in difference in the sensible world as given by appearance in perception. In the *Timaeus*, the unstable flux of differences is the result of the binding of the soul to the body, of understanding to perception. The regular motion of the Same in the soul is a product of the detachment of the soul from body, when the unstable flux of difference has been transformed into the stable law of identity in understanding. “And because of all this the soul when first bound to its mortal body is

as much without reason today as it was in the beginning. But when the stream of growth and nourishment flows less strongly, the soul's orbits take advantage of the calm and as time passes steady down in their proper courses, and the movement of the circles at last regains its correct natural form" (44), that given by the principle of the universal in reason.

As it is subject to differentiation, the understanding is given through appearance, according to Hegel, through reason in perception. But the understanding, in self-consciousness, sees differentiation as a manifestation of universal differentiation; as self-consciousness, the differentiation which the understanding sees is its own. All differentiation in the real, in matter and nature, as given by appearance, is perceived by mind as it projects itself, its own self-differentiation, into the real. Differentiation becomes universal in understanding because it is seen as the universal and eternal presence of differentiation in itself; the idea of infinity is the identity of the ideal and the real, the perception of the real as the identity of real and ideal within the ideal. In self-consciousness, in the inner world of mind not given to itself by perception, mind sees itself as identical to the super-sensible, that which precedes the real in perception, but it is only through the "mediating term of appearance" (§165) that mind sees itself as prior to appearance.

The participation of reason in the understanding is predicated on the function of discursive reason in perception; reason cannot see itself as differentiated from perception without the use of perception. Differentiation is only possible in identity, and the absolute in understanding is only possible in the differentiation in reason. In the self-consciousness of reason in perception, "this curtain hanging before the inner world is drawn away, and we have the inner being gazing into the inner world—the vision of the undifferentiated selfsame being, which repels itself from itself..." (§165). The curtain hanging before the inner world is the luminous embroidered veil in the *Republic*, the curtain along the road next to the cave which separates the cave from the sun, the real from the absolute; in the *Republic* it is "like the screen at puppet shows between the operators and their audience, above which they show their puppets" (514)⁸. The curtain is appearance itself as given by perception, through which discursive reason is interfused in the real; when the curtain is drawn away, the mechanisms of reason in relation to the real are drawn away. Reason is stripped of its operative being, and is only left in self-awareness of its inoperative being, its complete alienation from its own being in the world. The "inner being gazing into the inner world" sees the void of

the absolute, of absolute non-being, in relation to being as given by appearance in perception.

The void of the inner world is the vision of the immortal souls in the *Phaedrus* (247), which “when they reach the summit of the arch, go outside the vault and stand upon the back of the universe; standing there they are carried around by its revolution while they contemplate what lies outside the heavens....a reality without color or shape, intangible but utterly real, apprehensible only by intellect which is the pilot of the soul.” Only the intellectual can see behind the curtain of appearance constructed by reason, and see reason itself in its process of seeing, in self-consciousness. In the *Enneads* of Plotinus, the vision of the immortal souls is an inner vision which is detached from the sensual world in perception, and is given by intellection, the understanding. “Many times it has happened: lifted out of the body into myself; becoming external to all other things and self-centered; beholding a marvelous beauty; then, more than ever, assured of community with the loftiest order; enacting the noblest life, acquiring identity with the divine; stationing within it by having attained that activity; poised above whatsoever within the Intellectual is less than the Supreme...” (IV.8.1).⁹ Reason as it perceives itself in being differentiates itself from itself, as given to itself in consciousness, and sees itself in the illusion of seeing itself see itself, itself as given to itself in perception, in the illusion of consciousness. The self-differentiated illusion of seeing itself is manifest as the absence of differentiated being, as represented by the intelligible in the absolute.

For Jacques Lacan in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, the “*I see myself seeing myself*”¹⁰ of consciousness dissociates reason to itself from perception; consciousness is the “illusion of *seeing itself seeing itself*” (p. 82), which is the gaze, the double negative of reason in appearance. If reason is given by appearance, it is impossible for reason to go behind appearance, behind the curtain into an ulterior reality. But if appearance is given by reason in consciousness for Hegel, then the revelation of being behind the curtain in the understanding is conceivable to reason. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “For this knowledge of what is the truth of appearance as ordinarily conceived, and of its inner being, is itself only a result of a complex movement whereby the modes of consciousness ‘meaning’, perceiving, and the Understanding vanish...” (§165). As reason in consciousness requires the self-negation of reason, as reason cannot see itself in the manifestation of itself in the illusion of seeing itself seeing itself, appearance cannot be given by reason, and it is impossible for reason to enter behind the

curtain of appearance. The essence of being is thus inaccessible to reason, though it can be represented in the intelligible, as in the luminous embroidered veil. “Our existence,” as Georges Bataille describes it in *Inner Experience*, “is an exasperated attempt to complete being.”¹¹ Being in fact “is ‘ungraspable’—it is only grasped in error.”¹²

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of Hegel, self-consciousness is desire in that it wills itself in “superseding this other that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life” (§174), establishing a certainty in self-consciousness of itself set against the other, which in the negation of reason in perception is nothingness. Desire is the determinate self-perpetuation of self-consciousness around the void of its other, the dark ground of being, described by Bataille as “the dark repulsive core around which all agitation gravitates,”¹³ the place of the repulsion of reason in perception from itself. For Hegel, desire is the objectification of self-differentiation in self-consciousness, the self-determinate process of reason confronting its self-negation in the ideal, which corresponds to the determinate self-perpetuation of self-consciousness. The thinking subject, according to Jacques Lacan in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, projects himself into the real and negates himself in relation to the real as given by appearance, thus “sustaining himself in a function of desire” (p. 85). Desire is the continuous reconstitution of reason in non-reason, the continuous enactment of the self-differentiated and self-alienated identity of reason to being in self-consciousness in perception.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the differentiated particulars given by perception in reason are an “essence-less by-play” (§687) of self-conscious mind. “The determinations of this substance are only attributes which do not attain to self-subsistence, but remain merely names of the many-named One,” the absolute spirit as given by language in discursive reason. The variable forms of appearance in sense perception are adornments of reality, the luminous embroidered veil of the real, indeterminate and insubstantial. The proliferation of differentiated forms, vanishing shapes in the real, is the “reeling, unconstrained Life” (§688) of being-for-self. As being-for-self, the real is the negative antithesis of the consciousness of mind, through which mind gains self-consciousness, as being-in-itself in the other. Pure light sacrifices itself to being-for-self in the multiplicity of forms in the real so that the absolute can participate in the particular form, as for Plotinus, and so that the particular form can see itself as being-in-itself in the other of self-consciousness. Mind, as such, is an “artificer” for Hegel, like the Platonic Demiurge; it re-

produces itself in the objective in consciousness prior to self-consciousness, prior to the double negative of the realization of itself. Its presence in the objective is thus not participant in itself; its alterity to itself gives itself to self-consciousness, as the alterity of discursive reason to itself gives itself to itself in self-consciousness.

Self-conscious mind in discursive reason is united with the intellectual through the subjective intelligence, or the imagination, as for Plotinus. The intellectual “rises out of its unreality into actual existence,” from the universal to the particular, “out of a state in which it is unknowing and unconscious into the realm of conscious Spirit” (§463). Mind is differentiated from the appearance of being. The absolute, the unconscious real of nature, is seen as a void in being, complete formlessness prior to the formation of the image in the imagination. It is “the nightlike void of the supersensible beyond” (§177), inaccessible to discursive reason. Reason becomes aware of itself in abstract thought, given by imagination, and sees itself as other in conscious thought and self-consciousness, in being-for-self, as noted by Eduard von Hartmann in the *Philosophy of the Unconscious* of 1868 (pp. 27–8).¹⁴ The origin of the abstract thought of discursive reason is its being-in-self, in intuition or the intellectual. In reason connected to sense perception, reason becomes alienated from its other, as it becomes aware of its incompatibility with the real, with nature, and with its self-perception of its own absence in nature. Reason then attempts to overcome its self-alienation in a dialectical struggle which returns reason to itself, as a tropic representation in language of the reality that it sees itself a part of.

Hegel described appearance as uniting discursive reason and the intellectual (inner being). Appearance is a stage of being between understanding in discursive thought and essence in the intellectual. As a being-for-self, appearance is a “surface show” (*Phenomenology of Spirit* §143). As a surface show, appearance is only a “vanishing.” Appearance as show or veil is the instrument of discursive reason, in the dialectic of perception for Hegel. The surface show as a totality is a form of universal, a product of creative imagination, a reflection of the totality of the intellectual, or the “inner into self.” The operative force of the mediation is appearance, which is part of the movement of the forces of being, in which the object of perception, the “sensuously objective,” is the negative of pure being, the real of nature, its other. As this occurs in conscious thought, conscious thought is both ground and consequence of perception. As in understanding in perception, it is both the object of perception and the act of perception. The inner being or being-in-

self to conscious thought is possessed in its own certainty of self, as intuition, but the objective being, discursive reason, is outside of itself, fluctuating and unstable, in the flux of the dialectic. The flux is the objective vanishing appearance, the twilight of things in the sensible world.

The supersensible world of the intellectual becomes the object of understanding above the sensuous world in discursive reason in perception, a permanent beyond above the vanishing present, a being-in-self. Inner being is unknowable by sense knowledge. It is a void around which desire in perception circulates, as in the *das Ding* of Freud and the *object a* of Lacan, a being beyond measurement and the objects of reason. In that supersensible being comes about through appearance, as a mediating factor, appearance itself cannot be said to be of the sensuous world (*Phenomenology of Spirit* §147), as it is a representation in discursive reason of intuition or noetic thought. Perception is not sense knowledge; it is a product of the dialectic of the particular and universal through *nous pathetikos* and *nous poietikos*, as for Plotinus. The universal in inner being is an outcome of the flux of appearance (§149). The universal contains within itself a negation and mediation which is the dialectical process from appearance to being-in-self, from the phenomenal to the noumenal. “This difference is expressed in the law,” according to Hegel, “which is the stable image of unstable appearance.” The supersensible world is “an inert realm of laws” beyond the perceived world that only exhibits laws in “incessant change” in conscious thought and perception.

The inert realm of laws “is indeed the truth for the Understanding,” but it is not entirely manifest in appearance, but only inconsistently, given the state of flux and particularity, as “with every change of circumstance the law has a different actuality.” The world of appearance becomes stable in inner being, as it becomes governed by universal and unchanging laws, concepts in intuition and intelligibles. Through appearance, discursive reason becomes unified with the supersensible world. It is able to anticipate beyond appearance, into the ideas or principles which govern it behind the veil of forms. Being-in-self comes about when inner being sees into the inner world, and the curtain hanging before the inner world is drawn away. At this point, the dialectical processes of perception and understanding are transcended in discursive reason, and the inner being becomes unified and identical with the inner world in noetic thought.

It is through self-consciousness that conscious thought attains inner being and transcends the dialectic of appearance and void, particular and universal, toward the absolute, the real of nature. Thus, “it is in self-consciousness, in

the Notion of Spirit, that consciousness first finds its turning point,” from unconscious to conscious thought, “where it leaves behind it the colorful show of the sensuous here-and-now and the nightlike void of the supersensible beyond, and steps out into the spiritual daylight of the present” (§177). All preliminary forms of discursive reason are abstract manifestations of mind in intuition or the intellectual, particular manifestations of the universal. Mind or the intellectual unfolds in consciousness, as each particular form in conscious thought contains the absolute or the intellectual. The forms of discursive reason are “only moments or vanishing quantities” (§440), ephemeral representations, as for Plotinus. Discursive reason becomes being-in-self when it “embraces” sense-certainty, perception and understanding, that is, when it becomes self-conscious; the absolute is the unity, or self-identification, of conscious thought and self-consciousness. Mind is discursive reason that becomes aware of itself in self-consciousness, although it becomes clear in the *Philosophy of Mind* that Hegel sees self-consciousness as an illusion, as does Lacan.

In nature, the artificer, the unconscious real or objective, uses organic form to communicate self-consciousness of the absolute as being-for-self. The organic form, which is only a casing or ornament for life forms, subsumes the rectilinear flat shapes corresponding to abstract forms of thought from perception, and “left to itself, proliferates unchecked in particularity, being itself subjugated by the form of thought” (§694). The organic form remains in the realm of the particular, but communicating a quality of the absolute, the conflation of the particular and universal, in the symbol. The organic form in perception is the “shape of individuality” (§695) introduced into the aspect of the universal, the abstract form, bringing the absolute nearer to existence, making the form “more in harmony with active self-consciousness.”

In order for nature to express the inner being within the outer shape in perception it must withdraw into its essence, its real, and shed its “living, self-particularizing, self-entangling manifold existence” (§696) of crystalline and organic forms. The inner being first revealed is “still simple darkness, the unmoved, the black, formless stone,” the dialectical otherness of light and self-consciousness. The inner being “of multiform existence is still soundless, is not immanently differentiated and is still separated from its outer existence” (§697). The unintelligible form of inner being is the product of the combination of nature and self-consciousness and “the darkness of thought mating with the clarity of utterance,” the inexpressible and its form of expression, the *logos endiathetos* or unuttered words of the intellectual

and the *logos prophorikos* or spoken word of discursive reason. Only such a union can express the absolute in form in perception.

The expression of mind or spirit in form is the doubling of self-consciousness over against itself, the transcendence of matter in relation to consciousness. The outer form retreats inward, and the inner form is self-identical to the intuition or intelligible. The inner form is the form of self-conscious activity, thought creating itself; “the artificer has given up the synthetic effort to blend the heterogeneous forms of thought and natural objects” (§699). The inner form is “present to its own consciousness” as consciousness itself. The form of mind is the identity of the changing and the changeless, the outer substance and inner essence of the intelligible form and sensible form, the identity of self-consciousness and being-in-self (§748). The form of mind in perception is the externalization of the essence of the absolute, but it is enacted in the material forms of change, of “coming-to-be” (§754) in discursive reason and perception. If the form of the coming-to-be is contained within itself, as an object of discursive reason in perception, then it is a “vanishing object” and aspires to “immediate unity with the universal self-consciousness.” If the sensible form represents a universality and is also composed of the certainty of discursive reason and perception, then the sensible form exists in the world “as existence raised into an ideational representation,” in the imagination. Sensible forms “constitute the periphery of shapes which stands impatiently expectant around the birthplace of Spirit as it becomes self-consciousness” (§754). At the center of the forms is the pure concept of intuition, “the simplicity of the pure Notion,” in which the forms are self-contained as intelligible forms.

The intelligible form of the Kantian categories of time and space in a priori intuition is “only the imperfect form in which the immediate mode is given a mediated or universal character,” according to Hegel; “it is merely dipped superficially in the element of thought, is perceived in it as a sensuous mode, and not made one with the nature of thought itself. It is merely raised into the realm of picture-thinking (*Vorstellung*),” as a representation, “for this is the synthetic combination of sensuous immediacy and its universality or thought” (§764). Form in matter, sensible form, is only a derivative or a copy of the idea of form, intelligible form. In order to participate in the universal, or absolute, form in matter must be perceived, must become a form of picture thinking; thus perception is the medium between the absolute and material, perception in discursive reason.

Noetic reason, or the intellectual, according to Hegel, “does not require, as does finite activity, the condition of external materials”; it is only in the image of discursive reason, in picture thinking through perception in conscious thought, that form in matter is possible, as perceived *eidos*. Reality given by perception is the realization of discursive reason. Mental images are pre-generated by the process of reasoning, through perception and imagination, as for Plotinus. It is through perception and picture thinking in imagination, that mind becomes self-conscious, though perception itself is not the self-consciousness of mind. Mind cannot attain self-consciousness in perception because perception entails the separation of being and reason, essence and substance. The content of being, the real in nature, becomes multiple and differentiated in perception, as opposed to the apperception of Plotinus; it is subject to time in sequence, and space in measurement and proportion, as with Kant. The essence of being, being-in-self, cannot be known by the level of consciousness as given by perception, but through perception self-consciousness of mind can be attained.

The *Vorstellung* or picture thinking in the imagination is the middle term between the absolute and existence, the universal and particular, the intellectual and discursive reason, unconscious and conscious thought. The self-consciousness of mind or spirit is its descent into existence. Picture thinking, as the middle term, is the synthetic connection of spirit and existence, the doubling of the self-consciousness of spirit, the “consciousness of passing into otherness” (§767), the self-alienation of discursive reason. Picture thinking is a manifestation of mind, as is the self-consciousness of the thinking subject. The “dissociation in picture-thinking” of mind or the intellectual, unconscious thought, “consists in its existing in a specific or determinate mode,” a particular in the universal diffusion of mind in existence. In the objectivity of picture thinking, mind steps forward out of itself toward the absolute, where it is able to “become an actual Self, to reflect itself into itself” (§766) in self-consciousness.

In pure thought or intuition, the intellectual, the absolute is “immediately simple and self-identical, eternal essence” (§769). As an inner essence, the absolute cannot be signification or existent, but pure being-in-self. It is not the substance of picture thinking or of discursive reason, but the negative of conscious thought, “the negativity of thought, or negativity as it is in itself in essence; i.e. simple essence is absolute difference from itself, or its pure othering of itself.” The intellectual is the othering of discursive reason. In the *Mystical Theology* of Pseudo-Dionysius, “the pre-eminent cause of every ob-

ject of sensible perception is none of the objects of sensible perception” (136),¹⁵ and the absolute is “eminently unknown yet exceedingly luminous, where the pure, absolute and unchanging mysteries of theology are veiled in the dazzling obscurity of the secret silence, outshining all brilliance with the intensity of their darkness,”¹⁶ in the intellectual, as it were. The otherness of the absolute is the objective, as given by picture thinking in its differentiation in the reproductive imagination.

For Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the absolute unfolds toward existence in three stages: essence, being-for-self as the other of essence, and being-for-self as self-consciousness in the other (§770). Being-for-self as the other of essence is an externalization, and the self-consciousness of essence itself. Being-for-self as the other of essence is the logos, signification in language, which “when uttered, leaves behind, externalized and emptied, him who uttered it, but which is as immediately heard, and only this hearing of its own self is the existence of the Word,” as in the *logos endiathetos* of Plotinus. The externalization of essence as other is the radical otherness from essence or origin which constitutes thought in language, the radical otherness of perception from intellection.

The externalization of essence as other, and the self-consciousness of essence as other, in language, is the *Vorstellung* in imagination, given by reason in signification (through the logos). Essence itself is an other of the absolute, an abstraction in signification and a negation of the universal (§772). Essence is the other of the self-contained and undivided of the absolute in existence, thus the originary self-consciousness. The difference between absolute and essence is resolved in pure intuition, and in pure being, and is not differentiated as in discursive reason or existence. The otherness of the absolute is contained within itself in pure thought and being, though the absolute contains the seed of differentiation and otherness. The absolute, “eternal or abstract spirit” (§774), self-sufficient being, passes into the otherness of existence, when elements of pure being “spontaneously part asunder and also place themselves over against each other” (§773), in differentiation.

The creation of the world of otherness is picture thinking, the self-consciousness of mind that manifests itself in the imagination and perception. Essence is then posited as existence and universals are posited as particulars in discursive reason and perception, in the “dissolution of their simple universality and the parting asunder of them into their own particularity” (§774). Mind, the intellectual, retains its presence in all particularity and is recognized in the particular when the individual self “has consciousness

and distinguishes itself as ‘other’, or as world, from itself,” in discursive reason. The individual self must become an other to itself in conscious thought before it can recognize itself as mind or spirit, as the absolute must become other to itself to enter into existence. The self-consciousness of mind, and the individual self, as other, entails a withdrawal into itself, through self-consciousness. The individual self in self-consciousness must become self-alienated, must see its existence as alien to being, in order to become conscious of its participation in spirit, the intellectual.

The relations between perception and language and thought and nature, the ideal and real, are further explored by Hegel in the *Philosophy of Mind* (*Philosophie des Geistes*), Part Three of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, 1830). Mind (*Geist*) is a product of nature, but nature vanishes in the self-consciousness of mind, in the being-for-self of the idea or intelligible in mind. In self-consciousness the subject and object of the idea are the same, and the necessity of nature in the principle of sufficient reason is no longer adequate or appropriate for the phenomenon of mind, as it sees itself in self-consciousness. The identity of subject and object in the idea or intelligible, which does not occur in nature, is “absolute negativity” (*Philosophy of Mind* §381)¹⁷ because it does not consist of the externalization of essence which is necessary in nature as a function of material reproduction and the laws of necessity in reason. The identity of subject and object is only possible outside of nature, and only possible in mind. In nature, idea is in a state of “asunderness” where subject and object are not unified in it; it is external to both itself and mind, and the essential nature of mind, in its self-conscious otherness which is not possible in nature, because of the lack of the revelation of the absolute in nature, because of the material necessity of the particular.

The “triumph over externality” of mind is the “ideality of mind,” the self-consciousness of mind in its opposition to causal necessity and to itself. The ideality of mind is itself a necessary product of the relation between mind and what is external to it, and the self-consciousness of mind in its relation to its externality, in its translation of its externality to its inner function, as philosophy entails primarily the translation of the particular to the universal. Mind defines itself in its translation of that which is external to it, and is thus set against nature. Language is a function in mind of the translation from the external or objective to the subjective, and from the particular to the universal. The very nature of the sign in language is that the particular becomes subject to the universal in the transition of the perceived object into the word,

and the simultaneous transition of the word into the idea. The formulation of language is a process of the externalization of perception, of *Vorstellung*, into the particulars which mask the unified universality of existence and render existence fragmented and self-alienated.

The word in language abstracts the universal from the particular; meaning is a product of the self-differentiation of the particular in language, the primordial dehiscence of the universal in nature. Any word in language given to designate a particular is automatically taken as a universal in abstract thought. The universal is only given by the external manifestation of the particular in the word, and is thus necessarily a negation, a double negation, of consciousness in language in relation to externality. Self-conscious mind for Hegel “sets itself over against itself, makes itself its own object and returns from this difference, which is, of course, only abstract, not yet concrete, into unity with itself.” Mind is thus necessarily given to itself in ideality, as a function of language. In its ideality, mind abstracts particulars into universals; it transforms the reality with which it is confronted, leaving it “poisoned and transfigured,” transformed into a spiritual existence of the abstracted universal. The universality in abstract mind in fact prevents the material reality with which it is confronted to exist as independent of that universality and abstraction; mind is condemned to its own mechanisms in self-consciousness and self-differentiation. There is no possibility of mind overcoming itself, of knowing anything beyond itself, beyond its own premise of operations. In that mind sees itself as differentiated from nature, there is no possibility that mind can know nature beyond the premise of its self-differentiated relation to it, just as in the pre-scientific era mind could only know nature in so far as it could project itself into it.

In the biological necessity of self-differentiation, the *Trieb*, mind can never be satisfied with its own limited activity in the abstraction of the particular to the universal, material reality in perception to the idea, in language and thought. The product of this restlessness and dissatisfaction in philosophy is the desire for an absolute, the universal which is hidden by the externality of language in thought. Mind seeks the essence of the material in perception which is lost in language; philosophy is thus a seeking beyond language, an attempt to rescue the essence and universal which has been lost by the activity of thought in its self-consciousness. The idea is the perceived resurrection of the essence of being in reason, or finite thought, the re-entrance of the absolute into the self-differentiated and sundered structure of rational thought, as the intellectual is to discursive reason in the thought of

Plotinus. In discursive reason, ideality in self-consciousness develops toward the absolute in the dialectic, and is thus dependent on the self-differentiation and negation given by reason in perception.

In perception, mind orders the world according to its own mechanisms, its reason, and forms in perception, like forms in language, correspond to the self-affirmation of mind in the negation of the other. Beauty in nature and art, as the self-affirmation of mind, is also the negation or destruction of the other, what is other to reason. Through language and perception, form and content become identical in mind. Content is only differentiated from form, as intelligible, in the intellectual, in the dialectical transcendence of reason in the return of mind to itself from being-for-self in self-consciousness. Content (being-within-itself) is only given to mind as separate from form in the manifestation of mind only to itself, in self-consciousness in the return from the other. Metaphysical philosophy seeks to discover content as separate from form; whether such an independent existence is possible is irrelevant to the necessity of mind to discover itself in its own negation.

In the *Philosophy of Mind*, Hegel described unconscious thought or the intellectual, as an intelligence which is a “night-like mine or pit in which is stored a world of infinitely many images and representations, yet without being in consciousness” (§453), inaccessible to conscious thought. He wrote that “...I do not as yet have full command over the images slumbering in the mine or pit of my inwardness, am not as yet able to recall them at will” (§453, Zusatz). Hegel placed the unconscious in nature or the real, as a “germ” from which all qualities come into existence, as in the development of a tree. Intelligence itself is a “subconscious mine,” an undifferentiated universal prior to its realization as particulars and separations or differentiations, like classical archetypal intelligence, the intellectual of Plotinus. The origin of the universal as a mental representation must be found in this unconscious realm, the real of nature, inaccessible to conscious thought. The origin of the universal in thought is in the material reality of nature, as in the material substrate of Aristotle.

It is through the intuition, following Kant, that the images of the intellectual are presented to discursive reason and perception as objective representations of universals transformed into particulars. The a priori intuition is thus a mechanism of the intellectual or unconscious thought, the content of which is presented to conscious thought in the form of images, as in the imagination of Plotinus. The objective images presented to conscious thought in the *Vorstellung*, picture thinking or representation, are not the content of un-

conscious thought themselves, according to Hegel, but rather a “plastic shape of an existent intuition of similar content” (§454, Zusatz), that is, a representation or a copy. The universal unconscious of nature can only be conceived through representations of it as archetypal forms of intuition that can then only be known or cogitated through representations in the particulars of conscious thought. The consciousness of a present plastic, objective form of an intuition then makes us aware that there is an unconscious, noetic memory of previous intuitions, as in the schemata of Kant.

The representation or *Vorstellung* is a “‘synthesis’ of the internal image with the recollected existence,” the mnemonic residue of the sensible form. The internal image (*Bild*) would be the intelligible image, thus the presentation would be the synthesis of the sensible and intelligible images, formed through language, as in Plotinus. In *Enneads* V.3.3, impressions are received by discursive reason from sense perception, but discursive reason can only respond to them with the help of memory. With the help of memory, discursive reason then performs analytical operations on the impressions from sense perception, “taking to pieces what the image-making power gave it...”¹⁸ As the perception of a sensible object entails both the *eidos* of the object and the *eidos* of the intelligible idea of the object in the intellectual, “actual seeing is double” (*Enneads* V.5.7). The power (*virtus* of Grosseteste) to form the image in the mind’s eye is conversely always accompanied by the “verbal expression” (IV.3.30), or more accurately, the *logos endiathetos*, the word in thought, as Plotinus intended it. The intelligible image, and thus the sensible image, is not possible without the linguistic expression of it, and linguistic expression is not possible without the intelligible image. Perception of sensible objects is only possible after the idea of the sensible object is articulated in language in intellection. While the “intellectual act is without parts,” as it has not been differentiated in discursive reason, and thus in perception, it “has not, so to speak, come out into the open, but remains unobserved within,” as Plotinus described it.

As a result of the synthesis of the sensible and intelligible image (form), according to Hegel, “by this synthesis the internal now has the qualification of being able to be presented before intelligence and to have its existence in it” (*Philosophy of Mind* §453, Zusatz), as for Plotinus, in discursive reason, through imagination, language and memory. In the presentation in discursive reason, the intelligible forms of the intellectual, universals or archetypes, are manifest as “singularized and mutually independent powers or faculties” (§451, Zusatz), for Hegel. The form that is produced in the imagination and

made available to conscious thought is a *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, a representation of a representation, as for Freud. Our identity in conscious thought or discursive reason, or our self-consciousness, can only be given as a representation doubled over, far removed from the origin of discursive thought in the intellectual. Self-consciousness is an illusion; it can only be of a representation in the differentiated particulars of sense perception and imagination, the shadows on the wall in the Allegory of the Cave of Plato, as it were, as in the subject of Plotinus caught in a play of mirror reflections.

Discursive reason, according to Hegel, is dependent upon images in the reproductive imagination, following Kant. The reproductive imagination is an imitation of the productive imagination, connected to the empirical laws of sense perception and the differentiation of particulars. The differentiation of particulars is derived from the universals of space and time, the a priori intuitions in the categories of Kant. Space and time are then not pure concepts for Hegel, but rather qualities of the universal unconscious of nature, the real. The manner in which the universal intuitions become differentiated particulars in discursive reason defines the individuality of the thinking subject. The formation of the image in the reproductive imagination, as it is tied to the particulars of sense perception, is unique in each individual, while the intuition from which the image is formed is a universal in nature. According to Hegel in the *Philosophy of Mind*, through recollection, which is the “first form of mental representation” (§455, Zusatz), intelligence, or the intellectual, “emerging from its abstract inward being into determinateness,” thus “disperses the night-like darkness enveloping the wealth of its images,” in the inaccessibility of unconscious thought, “and banishes it by the luminous clarity of a present image” in conscious thought as given by imagination.

There are three stages by which intuition is unfolded as an image or form in imagination for Hegel. The first is the stage most tied to empirical experience, being the reproductive imagination, by which the image enters into existence. Through connecting and associating the existent image with other existent images, the images are raised to “general ideas or representations.” The general ideas or representations are then related to the existent image as a particular, in the third stage, and the representation itself assumes a “pictorial existence.” The third stage is the “creative imagination (*Phantasie*),” or productive imagination. The creative imagination produces symbols and signs, mechanisms of the connection between the particular image and the universal idea, sensible form and intelligible form. The sign connects the

present existent image to the unconscious memory of images, and thus to the transition to the universal idea.

In the thought of Kant, the reproductive imagination is a passive imagination, creating derived representations and reproducing empirical perceptions in connection with memory within the framework of intuition. The productive imagination is an active imagination, able to produce a representation of an object preceding empirical experience, in intuition. The power to reproduce the form of an a priori intuition in the lower imagination is the *Bildungskraft*. The productive imagination, *Einbildung*, operates without any connection to empirical phenomena, or sensible or intelligible form. There are six levels of image formation in the Kantian scheme, which are summarized in the Hegelian scheme. The reproductive imagination is composed of *Abbildung*, *Nachbildung*, and *Vorbildung*: direct image formation in the present moment, reproduction of images that have already been formulated, and reproduction of images from the past and present in anticipation of future images. The activities of the reproductive imagination are connected to discursive reason and sense perception. While they are governed by the categories of a priori intuition, the activities of the reproductive imagination generate images according to empirical laws of association connected to sense perception.

The productive imagination is composed of *Einbildung*, *Ausbildung*, and *Gegenbildung*, and is not connected to sense perception or empirical experience, thus being a product of the intellectual. *Einbildung* is the power to invent images not connected to sense perceptions, and comes into discursive reason through the formation of the invented image. *Ausbildung* completes the invented image in the intellectual, and the invented image is finally formed in *Gegenbildung* as a symbol or a sign, as a representational mechanism, as in Hegel's scheme, connecting the image with the a priori intuition. *Gegenbildung* completes the process of the intuition or intelligible becoming an existent form in a representation in discursive thought as image, through the analogue, symbol or sign, as in the *logos endiathetos* in the imagination in the scheme of Plotinus. The *symbolum* provides the illusion of the self-consciousness of discursive reason, and also the consciousness of the necessity of the intellectual.

Through the imagination, according to Hegel, the individual is subsumed under the universal, the unconscious of nature, as in the conceptual categories of Kant. The intelligence or intellectual is a "concrete subjectivity" (§456), derived from a "latent content" or "Ideal principle." Latent content is

the term used by Freud to describe unconscious dream thoughts before they are transformed into dream images, the manifest content. The Ideal principle recalls the terminology of Plotinus, the intelligible in *nous poietikos* or the intellectual. Such intelligence can only be known by anticipation, as it is represented in the imagination. The creative imagination is that aspect of intelligence or unconscious thought that is able to associate created images, mnemonic images, or images in memory, and existent images, through representation, combining subjective and objective experience, or the ideal and the real, to create conscious thought in discursive reason, and self-consciousness. The creative imagination is seen as “symbolic, allegorical, or poetical imagination,” operating through the *symbolum*, or *logos endiathetos* as it were. The allegorical or poetical is figural and tropic, as in the tropic mechanisms in language of condensation and displacement through which the latent content of dreams is transformed into the manifest content, according to Freud, described by Lacan as metaphor and metonymy. The imagination, which gives us our reality, is not a literal representation, but rather poetic. Reality is constructed by language, and the synthesizing function of the creative imagination. Individual, particular objects of sense perception and reproductive imagination are synthesized into a poetic, tropic totality, as in the manifold of Kant, or the apperception of Plotinus, that necessitates its source in the intellectual or unconscious thought. Kant and Hegel mined the themes of classical philosophy in order to construct schemes to understand the functions of language and perception in intellection and reason, and in so doing paved the way for the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan.

This essay was developed from sections of the chapter “The Aesthetics of Hegel” in *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Spirit: From Plotinus to Schelling and Hegel*, New York: Peter Lang, 2005, and the chapter “Unconscious Thought in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Philosophies” in *Unconscious Thought in Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

¹ Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Christopher Gill (London: Penguin Books, 1999).

² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics (The Introduction to Hegel’s Philosophy of Fine Art, 1886)*, trans. Bernard Bosanquet, ed. Michael Inwood (London: Penguin Books, 1993).

³ Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. Desmond Lee (London: Penguin Books, 1965).

⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, “Introduction” (*Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*) in *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. F. P. B. Osmaston (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1975 [1920]).

⁵ Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Walter Hamilton (London: Penguin Books, 1973).

⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Arnold Vincent Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁷ Jacques Derrida, “Semiology and Grammatology, Interview with Julia Kristeva,” in *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 27.

⁸ Plato, Republic, *The Republic*, trans. Desmond Lee (London: Penguin Books, 1955).

⁹ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

¹⁰ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. 80.

¹¹ Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 89.

¹² Quoted in Jean-Louis Baudry, “Bataille and Science: An Introduction to Inner Experience,” in Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons, ed., *On Bataille, Critical Essays* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 276.

¹³ Rodolphe Gasché, “The Heterological Almanac,” in Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons, ed., *On Bataille, Critical Essays*, p. 112.

¹⁴ Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, trans. William Chatterton Coupland (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1931 [1868]).

¹⁵ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite*, trans. John Parker (London: James Parker, 1897).

¹⁶ Translated in Fran O’Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1992), p. 19.

¹⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind, Being Part Three of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

¹⁸ Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, The Loeb Classical Library, 1966).